SCRIPT BITS!
Issue: Sonic the Hedgehog #166-167 (AUG/SEPT'06)
Pages: (166) p2-3, 6-8
(167) p1, 5-8

Welcome one and all to a special holiday edition of **Script Bits!** This time we're taking on both parts of the ending chapter to "Mobius: 25 Years Later." Here you'll find all the insight into the world, characters and easter eggs you could hope for!

So pull out your copies of *Sonic the Hedgehog* #166 from August of 2006 and #167 from September of 2006 and get ready to read along!

Remembering "Mobius: 25 Years Later"

Let us first set the stage. Twenty-five years from the present continuity found a peaceful Mobius. Guardian Knuckles was watching over a prosperous, populous Angel Island while his daughter struggled with life of – essentially – young royalty. Meanwhile, King Sonic was complacent in his life as king and father. All was not well, however, as Mobius was on the brink of destruction. The zone-hopping and time traveling of the past had worn the fabric of time thin and threatened the then-present.

When we ended the main run of the story we had King Sonic warping into the past with old Robotnik technology. Lara-Su was vanishing, and it had been established that Lien-Da knew at least something of what was going on.

We skip ahead to when a certain new writer to *Sonic* is contacted by his editor. The final chapter of "Mobius: 25 Years Later" must be put into new hands and those hands were mine. I was given two directives: spice it up, compared to the slower-paced chapters before, and to include King Shadow. I set a directive for myself: to make Lara-Su more proactive. I had twenty-two pages to work with; eleven per issue. And so I got to work.

The biggest hurdles turned out the easiest to surmount. Shadow had to be on the throne and Lara-Su needed her character tweaked. I subscribe to the "Butterfly Effect" theory: that minute changes in one place or time can have profound and unforeseen effects on other locations or later down the time-line. Reckless King Sonic leapt into the time stream to fix his present. That there would be great changes down the line shouldn't come as a surprise.

I have been asked before why I didn't spend any time on King Sonic's efforts to fix space-time. I saw no need, especially with eleven pages a month to work with. "M25YL" wasn't about the past, but rather about what things had become. If I had had more time and space to work with, I could've perhaps shown King Sonic's recklessness and make a more blatant tie to the repercussions. Instead, I decided to focus on an altered future. This, in turn, helped to cut its ties from the present-day continuity and thus freeing the regular (or "Prime" if you will) continuity from the "M25YL" continuity and vice-versa; "Prime" continuity no longer had to adhere to the "M25YL"-future, at least not in an iron-clad fashion, and "M25YL" no longer had to be totally bound by events in the "Prime" timeline.

To explain the shift in time-lines, however, we needed an outside observer. I decided to bring in Tails since he had seen no active roll in the previous installments and

because I wanted to resolve the rift he and King Sonic had. Tails, being the technological genius he is, would have the foresight to see the time-space problem and to protect his family from the changes. To that end, the Tails-Mina couple is still "M25YL" continuity, as are their children (unofficially but affectionately named – in my mind – as Melody and Skye).

Tails, raised by bold and brave adventurers, would of course set out to set things right. To him, the reality shift would've been instant. In a world just different enough to notice, but his family the same as ever, and proactive friends abroad, Tails would put it all together. What he found was a history devoid of Sonic, who was busy fixing space-time. Shadow rose to the challenges in Sonic's stead and – in his own way – saved the world.

Where Sonic became the benevolent (if bored) King of Mobius, Shadow sought to save the world from itself. In a bid to temper his ruthlessness, Sally married him. Now King Shadow had a legitimacy to his conquest and was (somewhat) reigned in by Queen Sally. However, Sally is no ultimate life-form. She aged and that can't help when you're in a battle of wills with an immortal. I like to think Queen Sally did a great deal to help Mobius under King Shadow, but she could not do much.

Neither could Knuckles. And while he would chafe under a ruler a part of him would both respect and understand King Shadow's idea of peace and order. With the Chaotix at his side, Guardian Knuckles made the best of a bad situation and became the global monarchy's enforcers – as gently as possible.

King Shadow, however, was no fool. He made Maria the patron saint of the world, but he would know not everyone worshipped her. Likewise he would know Guardian Knuckles was placating him. Enter Lien-Da.

When we last saw Lien-Da she had caught Rotor and Cobor red-handed with information of the unraveling space-time and, presumably, their fledgling plan to fix things. Since she is not a woman to cross, Lien-Da was made an armband that would shield her from shifts in reality – just as the Prowers were. Granted, we took a short-cut in having Lien-Da's armband the same as Tails'. This was a necessary evil on my part to keep the newest readers up to speed and to stream-line the story. A great deal was being changed from the "M25YL" long-time readers were familiar with and spending time to explain the differences in plot devices would've spent time we didn't have.

Lien-Da, who had become a mother and council member, seemed far-removed from her position of power and ruthless temperament of her youth. I couldn't see her passing up an opportunity to both better her own position and take a couple of shots at the House of Edmund. The Kommissar would make for the ideal black ops. enforcer for King Shadow and leader of the "Dark Eyes" – the remnants of the Dark Legion.

But what about those who helped Lien-Da get where she was now? No good deed goes unpunished, and we find Rotor at the mercy of King Shadow. Cobor, who was exclusive to "M25YL" and would've ultimately been redundant in this storyline, was executed off-panel. The moment was somewhat softened with a small line change at the eleventh hour.

The published line went:

> "I did. **I thanked** him forty-seven times about the head and shoulders. It was a true pleasure."
> (King Shadow, StH#166, pg. 6, pn. 2)

The original scripted line was:
"I did. I thanked him I **thanked** him forty-seven times about the head and shoulders until he stopped breathing."

You can see why it was changed, right? While I do attempt to push the envelope on occasion, I realize that it means the envelope will be pushed right back with a big "NO" stamped on it. I was surprised with how far into the production process we managed to keep it.

Moving on, we touch upon the final bleak moment of the comic. Sonic, lost to time only to return and find he hardly existed, is on the streets. Aged and forgotten, our ex-king realizes all that he has lost. The children he seemed so annoyed by are not only taken from him, but erased from existence. The title and responsibilities he once strained under are now completely beyond his control. Sonic has a moment of cathartic release that is powerful, is moving, and was even more of a gut-punch in the early penciled pages. To see Tracy Yardley's haunting original pencils, you can find it on his DeviantArt account in the Scraps section:

http://www.deviantart.com/deviation/39732004/?&q=by%3Ayardley+in%3Ascraps&qh=sort%3Atime

Having hit our lowest note we begin to build back up. The rift between Sonic and Tails is healed at last. By the story's end Rotor has been rescued, the harsh king dethroned, and some semblance of the old order restored.

None of this would have been possible without Lara-Su. Something I really wanted to do was show Lara-Su as the Freedom Fighter (or Chaotic) of the new present-day. The daughter of Julie-Su had to have some sass. The daughter of Knuckles, the single most powerful Guardian ever, needed to have power of her own.

One of the most fun things to do with her was to play her off the mainstays of the series. Tails needed help to restore the world and Lara-Su's assistance gave us a look at her commitment to being Guardian – a protector of the island and the world. Her defiance to her beloved father gave us a glimpse of the temper she had to have inherited from both her parents; a temper based in nobility. And her moments of cheekiness, harkening back to the fun Sonic would have with his enemies of old, showed us she was just as much fun as the adventurers and heroes of the "Prime" timeline. I really like the character, and I put extra effort into making her the best I could.

With the events and characters touched upon, let us take a glance at some of the easter eggs and little touches both intended by me and added by the brilliant and talented Tracy Yardley!

StH#166-167 – "Latin lingua"

The titles for the two stories are Latin. Part one, "Tempus Fugit," translates to "time flies" and was meant to denote the rapid and sudden change to reality. Part two, "Tempus aeternus" roughly translates to "time eternal" meaning that the changes have stuck and life will go on.

StH#166 – "Welcome to Portal"

In the beginning chapters of "M25YL," Portal was a "new" city on Angel Island that was basically the port for all commerce to and from the floating continent. In this new future Portal has been made the capital of the world due to it being a trading hub and a highly secured position.

StH#166 – Page One – "Ave Maria"

Something I didn't get to investigate in-depth was King Shadow's saving the people from themselves. Part of that was giving them a beacon of hope; a benchmark for greatness. The one person Shadow would think of that fit that description was Maria. The angelic representation of his lost friend is being praised in Portal – as King Shadow would command.

StH#166 – Page One – "War is Peace"

There is a large poster showing Knuckles' glowering face and reads "The Chaotix Are Watching." This is a small nod to 1984 by George Orwell and is a quick visual cue to give the reader an idea what kind of world they're entering.

StH#166 – Page Two / Panel 1 – "Gem-like Clarity"

Tracy added a Chaos Emerald-like design to the window. Since this was Knuckles' command center I thought it a great little touch.

StH#166 – Page Four / Panel 3 – "Gone But Not Forgotten"

Lara-Su barely remembers Sonia and Manik of the old time-line. Since she was so close to the time-machine in the "old future," she would've been affected by the reality shift slightly differently than the rest of the world. This is also what Tails is hitting upon with Knuckles on the previous page.

StH#166 – Page Eight / Panel 1 – "At Least He Still Gets the Logo"

When Lara-Su speaks Sonic's name, it appears as the comic's logo. This was an intentional nod to the early days in the book where each chapter or act would invariably have Sonic referred to by both his full name and in logo-format. This was meant to be a parallel to put into stark contrast how far Sonic had fallen from grace.

StH#166 – Page Eight / Panel 1 & Page Nine / Panel 4 – "Not Like Chuck's"

Keep an eye on the moldy chili-dog. Lara-Su quietly boots the nasty thing away. King or not, Sonic doesn't need to be eating that.

StH#166 – Page Nine / Panel 1 – "Ave Maria – Again!"

Sonic's line: "Oh sweet Maria have mercy . . ." is meant to show he's spent at least some time in the new time-line and has picked up on the sainthood of Maria. Additionally – or alternatively, if you wish – it shows that he too has been tweaked by his own meddling with space-time.

StH#166 – Page Eleven – "Angel of Mercy"

Tracy went above and beyond the call of duty on this last page. A fantastic small thing he added as the Maria statue, completely blacked out, looming like some kind of

angel of death over the echidna forces and turning the entire patron-saint-thing on its head.

StH#166 – Page Eleven – "This is Who They Am"

Another great small touch by Tracy is the insignia on the craft. He gave them the Shadow insignia from the "Shadow the Hedgehog" game. Since they ultimately serve King Shadow, I thought this was a brilliant addition.

StH#167 – Page One – "Mommy Dearest"

Although he gets no lines, Rutan has a small and poignant moment here. He listens in as his mother reveals her villainous plans. We can see he's ashamed of his mother. On a completely unrelated note, I challenge anyone to pull off a better rendering of an echidna drinking at that angle than Tracy. Having dabbled in Sonic art myself, I know full-well how difficult it is to get muzzles to look right. This was just artistically brilliant.

StH#167 – Page Five / Panel 1 – "Just Like Old Times"

Sonic's line: "Let's do it to it," is much like the logo-speak in the previous issue. It was meant to harken back to the early days and add a touch of nostalgia to the future-adventures.

StH#167 – Page Eight through Nine – "Tikal Would be Proud"

Lara-Su use's "Tikal's Prayer" to channel and use the Chaos Force. It's a trend I intend to keep to throughout the series. It denotes a deeper understanding and respect for the power than, say, flinging energy while shouting "Chaos Spear!"

We'll end this with ten pages of script; five from each script. Enjoy, and happy holidays!

Selections from StH#166 – "Tempus Fugit"

<u>PAGE TWO</u>

PANEL 1 - Guardian Tower - the private offices of KNUCKLES and his forces. This room is a training room with padded flooring and high windows. It's a really nice gymnasium, essentially. LARA-SU (see S#131) follows through with wave of her arm, pointing. LARA-SU's finger trails a thin, green beam. A number of silver spheres are caught in an aura of identical green energy and follow the arc of LARA-SU's pointing.

KNUCKLES stands near-by, arms folded and smiling proudly. A few echidnas in white uniforms (any design - they're police/soldiers) mill about. You don't need many. TAILS approaches from behind KNUCKLES and LARA-SU, also smiling proudly.

TEXT BOX
First - the Guardian

TEXT BOX
Guardian Tower

LARA-SU
HA!
Daddy!
LOOK!!!

KNUCKLES
You're doing great, Lara-Su.
I wasn't nearly this good at your age.

PANEL 2 - LARA-SU wheels about and tackle-hugs KNUCKLES in delight. The silver orbs all drop from the air; the aura is gone. KNUCKLES hugs LARA-SU back. We see TAILS's head on panel, at an angle so we can see him smiling quietly at KNUCKLES's back.

LARA-SU
That's because I've got the best teacher in the world!

PANEL 3 - LARA-SU and KNUCKLES quickly break apart upon seeing TAILS. KNUCKLES is very grim, all previous warmth gone. LARA-SU is surprised. TAILS continues a serene, patient smile.

LARA-SU
Oh!
We have a visitor . . .?

TAILS
Knuckles.
It's been a long time.

PANEL 4 - Same layout as the previous panel. KNUCKLES's fists tighten. LARA-SU looks at him, confused. Otherwise, no change. TAILS and KNUCKLES never break eye-contact.

PANEL 5 - TAILS and KNUCKLES walk away from LARA-SU, who looks hurt, concerned and confused all at once. TAILS's smile is gone as he looks away. KNUCKLES is a solid wall - we can't read much out of his trademark scowl.

LARA-SU
. . . Daddy?

KNUCKLES
Go wash up.

I'll meet you back home.

LARA-SU
What?
But who is . . . why should I . . .?

KNUCKLES
Now, Lara-Su.

PANEL 6 - Small panel to the bottom right corner. KNUCKLES looks back over his shoulder, his glare softening into an apologetic look.

KNUCKLES
. . . please.

PAGE THREE

PANEL 1 - TAILS and KNUCKLES stand off to one side of the room where there are some shadows - primarily to give the reader the ambience. We can see LARA-SU stalking off in the background. KNUCKLES glares down at the floor. TAILS tries to catch KNUCKLES's eyes with his own.

TAILS
I know everything, Knuckles.
I know you weren't always King Shadow's chief enforcer.
I know you have memories of a different past and present.
I know you were near the tachyon chamber back then*

EDITOR'S NOTE
*see S#144

PANEL 2 - Close-up on KNUCKLES's scowling, downcast face. TAILS is visible from at least the chest up. TAILS points to the silver band on his arm.

KNUCKLES
You seem to know a lot for someone who wasn't . . . there.

TAILS
I knew there was a problem, so I took some precautions.
I kept myself and my family safe from the adjustment in space-time.
Everyone near the tachyon chamber carried over elements of the other-present.

KNUCKLES
Great.

PANEL 3 - TAILS puts his hand on KNUCKLES shoulder, looking sympathetic. KNUCKLES tenses up and looks away.

TAILS
No, it isn't.
There are things that are very wrong in this present, King Shadow chief among them.
Remember Cobor, the scientist who helped Rotor send Sonic back in time?
He was permanently silenced for his connection to all this, Knuckles.
We have to find Sonic and act . . .

PANEL 4 - KNUCKLES shrugs out of the touch - almost slaps TAILS away. TAILS recoils a bit, surprised. KNUCKLES glares at the fox.

KNUCKLES
Get out, Miles.
Before I place you under arrest.

PAGE SIX

PANEL 1 - Close-up on LIEN-DA. She taps the band on her arm and smiles wickedly.

LIEN-DA
. . .Thank Cobor.
He designed it for me once I caught him* and Rotor conspiring in the other time-line.

EDITOR'S NOTE
*see S#141

PANEL 2 - Close-up on KING SHADOW who wears a very small but cruel smile. LIEN-DA is in the background and covers her mouth, smiling in wicked delight.

SHADOW
I did.
I **thanked** him forty-seven times about the head and shoulders until he stopped breathing.

PANEL 3 - Back in the cell, we see ROTOR hang in his binds. He sags and appears to be losing hope.

TEXT BOX (red - Shadow)
Be sure to **thank** Rotor if he should finally give you any more information.

PANEL 4 - LIEN-DA pulls at the ends of her whip and gives the cell door a ghoulish smile. KING SHADOW glowers to himself. A DARK LEGIONAIRE approaches from deep-background. DARK LEGIONAIRE DESIGN: the classic black hood with red inner-face, but tight black-ops fatigues instead of a cloak.

LIEN-DA
With pleasure.

SHADOW
I cannot lose this world.
I have done too much good for it to be stopped now.

PAGE SEVEN

PANEL 1 - The DARK LEGIONAIRE hands a tech pad to LIEN-DA and salutes. (Tech Pad: think of those multi-purpose data-pads used in *Star Trek*; thin, wide version of an e-book, basically.) LIEN-DA replaces her whip and takes the tech pad. KING SHADOW turns to them both.

DARK LEGIONAIRE
Madam Enforcer!
The Dark Eyes thought you should see this.

LIEN-DA
Oh?
Dismissed, trooper.

PANEL 2 - LIEN-DA looks at the tech pad, its screen barely illuminating her face in the dark hall. LIEN-DA smiles in darkly delighted glee. KING SHADOW comes to her side.

LIEN-DA
Oh-ho!
This is too good to be true.

SHADOW
What is it?

LIEN-DA
It looks like little Lara-Su is running around with the wrong crowd!

PANEL 3 - LIEN-DA smirks as KING SHADOW looks at the tech pad. KING SHADOW does not smile, but rather looks sternly concerned. The limited illumination from the tech pad casts dire shadows on KING SHADOWS's face.

SHADOW
Contact my **legitimate** Chief Enforcer.
I want him to handle this immediately.

LIEN-DA
Of course, sire.

PANEL 4 - A dark alley-way in PORTAL. The sun is setting; it is almost night. TAILS comes around the corner and looks into the alley (looks at us). LARA-SU quickly comes around his shoulder and looks as well. TAILS has a bitter-sweet smile. LARA-SU is wide-eyed shocked.

TEXT BOX (reddish-magenta - Lien-Da)
I'm sure he'll arrest all three.

TAILS
There you are.
You couldn't make it easy for us?

LARA-SU
Whoa . . .

PAGE EIGHT

PANEL 1 - We see SONIC huddled under a ragged blanket in the alley. He looks like he's pushing his late 40s or 50s. SONIC smiles weakly. There's a moldy-looking, half-eaten chilidog on a hubcap before him - his dinner.

LARA-SU (from off-panel)
That's
(logo) Sonic the Hedgehog?

SONIC
I'll admit it, kiddo . . .
I ask myself that a lot lately.

PANEL 2 - TAILS kneels next to SONIC and puts an arm across SONIC's shoulders. SONIC smiles weakly down at his dinner. LARA-SU follows TAILS with some trepidation.

SONIC
One day you're king of the world.
Then you go dimension-hopping to fix all space-time and
BOOM!
You're on the street without anything but the sneakers on your feet.

PANEL 3 - SONIC smiles as TAILS with tears in his eyes. TAILS smiles back sympathetically.

SONIC
You're from the old future, aren't you?

TAILS
Yes.

SONIC
Mina and the kids . . .?

TAILS
I had them protected, like me.

SONIC
Good.
That's very good.

PANEL 4 - TAILS hugs SONIC tight around the shoulders and clenches his eyes against despair. SONIC sags and looks utterly crushed. LARA-SU falls back a step, hands over her mouth and tears standing in her eyes.

SONIC
Not Sonia and Manik, though.
They're gone forever.
And Sally is married to Shadow.
WHY?!

Selections from StH#167 – "Tempus Aeternus"

<u>PAGE ONE</u>

PANEL 1 - Largest panel of the page. We are in the main room of LIEN-DA's house (see S#135). LIEN-DA (see S#135) holds a wine glass elegantly. It has a liquid in it - I don't know what color we can use without any overt implications. DIMITRI'S HEAD (DIMIRI - see S#135) floats nearby. Give DIMITRI a scowl if you can manage it. Sneak in RUTAN (see S#131) listening in on the stairs if you can. Title to the top left corner, credits along the bottom unless you can think of something delightfully more creative.

TITLE: Mobius: 25 Years Later
Part Two: Tempus Aeternus

CREDITS
Writer: IAN "POTTO" FLYNN

Pencils:
Inks:
Colors:
Letters:
Editor: MIKE PELLERITO
Managing Editor: VICTOR GORELICK
Editor-in-Chief: RICHARD GOLDWATER
Special thanks to: _____ at Sega Licensing

LIEN-DA
. . . and I haven't had a better evening in my life, Grandfather!
Chief Enforcer Knuckles arrested his best friends and **daughter!**
I get praised by King Shadow!
And I had a hand in finally bringing down the Line of Edmund.

PANEL 2 - LIEN-DA drinks triumphantly. DIMITRI glowers (as best as you can manage).

DIMITRI
You are despicable, Lien-Da.
I have not been this ashamed of my bloodline since I worked with Dr. Finitevus.

LIEN-DA
Give it a rest, Dimitri.

PANEL 3 - On the stairs. RUTAN looks away from his mother and appears very confused and distraught.

LIEN-DA
This is the way things are now.
The only three who could change things are now locked away.

PAGE FIVE

PANEL 1 - Large, long panel. Everyone bursts from the prison door. SONIC and KNUCKLES come at us, side-by-side. TAILS flies off to the right. LARA-SU hefts ROTOR off to the left. All have looks of determination.

SONIC
Let's do it to it.

KNUCKLES
One last time.

ROTOR (small - an aside)

You have your father's strength.

LARA-SU (small - an aside)
Umph!
Good thing, too.

PANEL 2 - Side-view of TAILS as he pulls and connects cables. There are a few sparks. TAILS concentrates on his work, his tongue sticking out to one side as he works.

PANEL 3 - A hallway in Castle Mobius. We see nasty-looking ceiling mounted security drones go limp. (Drones: security cameras that could shoot the shoplifter, essentially). The doors along the walls lock. Have small burst-effects around the corners.

SFX (each door)
K-CHAK!

SFX (drones - small, diminishing)
Vrrrm....

PANEL 4 - SONIC and KNUCKLES race down the hall. They look straight ahead and smile competitively.

KNUCKLES
I'm turning against my own forces.
I can't help but feel guilty.

SONIC
Somehow, I don't think they'll hold it against you.

PANEL 5 - SONIC and KNUCKLES burst through the door. SONIC leads, calling out defiantly. Worm's-eye-view for the dynamic angle.

SONIC
Who ordered the extra-large butt-whooping, heavy on the poetic justice?

KNUCKLES
You've been working on that since you were arrested, haven't you?

SONIC
You better believe it.

<u>PAGE SIX</u>

PANEL 1 - The Throne Room. Large, high-ceilinged room. Something akin to Kenneth Branagh's *Hamlet* movie - high, white walls with an elegant (but simple) shiny floor. There is a set of doors beside the thrones leading to another room. There are large windows in the halls. We see it is night-time. KING SHADOW and QUEEN SALLY (see last issue and S#137 - respectively) stand. SONIC and KNUCKLES approach them.

KNUCKLES
Queen Sally, I ask that you come with me.

SHADOW
It's about time you returned, **King Sonic.**

PANEL 2 - QUEEN SALLY hurries across the hall to KNUCKLES. KING SHADOW smirks after QUEEN SALLY. SONIC doesn't take his eyes from KING SHADOW.

SHADOW
No love lost, my queen?

SONIC
You **know** about the other timeline?

SHADOW
Of course.
Lien-Da aside, I am the master of time and space.
Remember Chaos Control?

PANEL 3 - QUEEN SALLY enters into the back room and KNUCKLES closes the door behind them. KING SHADOW and SONIC watch.

PANEL 4 - SONIC bolts up to the thrown and hits KING SHADOW with a right-hook. KING SHADOW turns his head while struck, but doesn't recoil otherwise. SONIC smiles confidently.

SONIC
Now that Sally's safe -
Battle royal time!

PANEL 5 - Small, narrow panel. KING SHADOW, head still turned from the hit, *glares* at SONIC. SONIC pauses, unsure.

SONIC
Um . . .

PANEL 1 - Long, narrow panel to cap the top of the page. KING SHADOW throws his cape to the side, grim.

PANEL 2 - SMALL panel to the left. We see the cape begin to flutter to the floor.

PANEL 3 - Immediately next to PANEL 2. KING SHADOW spin-dashes into SONIC, sending them bother towards us.

SHADOW
You are old.
Past your prime.

PANEL 4 - SMALL panel to the left. The cape flutters closer to the floor.

PANEL 5 - Immediately next to PANEL 4. KING SHADOW kicks SONIC in the side. SONIC recoils, wincing.

SHADOW
I am the Ultimate Lifeform.
I never age.

PANEL 6 - SMALL panel to the left. The cape begins to touch down on the floor.

PANEL 7 - Immediately next to PANEL 6. KING SHADOW upper-cuts SONIC. SONIC's head snaps back and he topples backwards.

SHADOW
You were barely a challenge twenty-five years ago.
Today you are **nothing.**

PANEL 8 - In extreme foreground, the cape crumples to the floor. In the background, KING SHADOW watches SONIC collapse unceremoniously.

SFX (cape)
frump

SFX (Sonic)
Thud!

<u>PAGE EIGHT</u>

PANEL 1 - LARA-SU glides in on her dreadlocks (like KNUCKLES in the games) and knocks KING SHADOW away from SONIC. KING SHADOW looks more surprised than injured. LARA-SU smiles defiantly. We can see one of the large windows is open, thus showing us where LARA-SU came from.

LARA-SU
Try picking on someone your age!

SHADOW
AUGH!

PANEL 2 - KING SHADOW throws a punch while they're in close quarters. LARA-SU ducks the punch and deflects it up with her arm.

SHADOW
You are what passes for a cavalry?

LARA-SU
I'm top in my class, if that counts for anything.

PANEL 3 - LARA-SU kicks at KING SHADOW. KING SHADOW faces us and blocks the kick with both his forearms at chest-level.

LARA-SU
What's the matter, Ultimate Lifeform?
Shouldn't you have beaten me by now?

SHADOW
You have your father's arrogance . . .

PANEL 4 - Smaller panel than the rest. KING SHADOW brings his hand down in a diagonal swipe. A jagged trail of green energy follows. LARA-SU is knocked back.

PANEL 5 - KING SHADOW advances on LARA-SU. KING SHADOW's hands are ignited in green fire. KING SHADOW wears an icy, livid glare.

SHADOW
. . . but I control the Power Chaos.

PANEL 6 - Small panel for the last corner of the page. LARA-SU smiles roguishly and adjusts her glasses on her nose. She clenches a fist, which is enveloped in a smooth, green energy ball.

LARA-SU
Join the club.